



Advocates for Human Potential, Inc.

490-B Boston Post Road, Suite 200 • Sudbury, MA 01776 • (978) 443-0055 • Fax: (978) 443-4722
262 Delaware Avenue • Delmar, NY 12054 • (518) 475-9146 • Fax: (518) 475-7654
www.ahpnet.com

To: National Resource Center, Policy Academy and Health Care for the Homeless Participants
From: Tom Lorello, M.S.W.; Associate, Homeless Programs
Subject: National Presentation Sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Outreach to the Homeless and the “Housing First” Model: Offering Housing During the First Contact by Outreach Workers

Date: MARCH 9, 2004 (Tuesday), 2:00 - 4:00 PM, Eastern Time

SAMHSA's PATH program will host the next in its series of national presentations designed to provide information, technical assistance, and a venue for discussion about programs and policies affecting people who are homeless and have serious mental illness.

Overview of the National Presentation

Topic: Outreach to the Homeless and the “Housing First” Model: Offering Housing During the First Contact by Outreach Workers

Presenters Sam Tsemberis, Executive Director, Pathways to Housing, New York City
Sheryl Silver, ACT Team Leader, PATH program, Pathways to Housing
Ann Denton, Advocates for Human Potential, Austin, Texas

Abstract: Housing First is a model that is based on the principle of consumer choice. It offers consumers true options, including permanent independent housing if they so choose. Research demonstrates that Housing First works to end chronic homelessness for people with mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse disorders. This has proved true despite the lack of requirements for sobriety or mental health treatment. It works well even for people who were widely considered to be “not housing ready” or “treatment resistant.” This national presentation will describe the essential components

of the Housing First approach and the implications of these for the PATH program. In particular, we will explore the role that outreach staff can play in facilitating immediate access to permanent supportive housing for PATH clients.

If the model is to work, it is essential that outreach teams be directly connected to housing resources, rather than existing as stand alone programs. Once a program has the capacity to offer immediate access to permanent housing, outreach workers emphasize housing, employment, and the recovery of real-life roles in the community. Mental health and substance abuse treatment, as well as other supportive services, become relevant as supports to achieving these goals, rather than prerequisites for them.

We will conclude this presentation with an overview of the steps that can be taken to implement the Housing First model in your community. An overview of strategies to fund both housing and supportive services will be presented, and means of overcoming common barriers to implementation will be discussed.

There may be supplementary materials for this presentation posted on the PATH website for downloading. If so, they will become available on March 8 at pathprogram.samhsa.gov

Featured Presenters

Sam Tsemberis, Ph.D. is a nationally recognized advocate of the Housing First approach. He is a clinical psychologist and a professor of Psychiatry at the New York University Medical Center. He is also the founder and Executive Director of Pathways to Housing in New York City, an agency based on the belief that housing is a basic right for all people. Pathways to Housing offers immediate access to independent permanent apartments to individuals who are homeless and who have psychiatric disabilities and substance use disorders. Dr. Tsemberis has received honors for his work from the Center for Mental Health Services and the National Alliance to End Homelessness, and others. He has been profiled by National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*, Public Broadcasting System's *The Newshour with Jim Leher*, and has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The New York Daily News* and *The Christian Science Monitor*.

Sheryl Silver has worked with people experiencing homelessness since 1987 and those with psychiatric disabilities since 1993. She is currently the team leader of a PATH-funded outreach team with Pathways to Housing in New York City. She is the cofounder of the organization, Alliance for Human Potential in Denver, Colorado, where she provided HIV education and prevention services to homeless injection drug users. Sheryl brings the

unique perspective of having worked on an outreach team earlier in her career that did *not* have immediate access to housing, and is now working on the Pathways team that does have this capability.

Ann Denton, M.Ed. has 20 years' experience as a leader in housing for people with mental disabilities. She currently directs a contract with the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) to provide comprehensive assessment of State and local provider performance of PATH programs. She has also provided technical assistance and training to more than 50 communities regarding the HUD Continuum of Care planning process. She assists providers with implementation issues related to the Olmstead Act as well as PATH. Prior to working at AHP, Ms. Denton was the Director of the Austin office of the Enterprise Foundation, and was the Texas State PATH Contact when she served as the Coordinator of Housing and Residential Services for the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation.

Presentation Capabilities:

You may listen to the presentation on your computer via the internet. To do so, the following equipment is needed: computer, sound card, speakers or headphones, internet access, and Windows Media Player software. Detailed instructions are attached.

If you have any questions about this audio program, please call Tom Lorello at (978) 261-1404 or Amy Sanborn at (978) 261-1411. For questions regarding internet access, please call Margaret Lassiter at (518) 439-7415, ext. 230.

Instructions for Listening to the Presentation on the Web

To Listen on the Web You Need:

1. Windows Media Player software. (It comes preinstalled on your computer.)
2. A sound card in your computer. On the back of your computer you should be able to see the place to plug in headphones or speakers.
3. Speakers and/or headphones.

1 Day Before the Presentation: Verify that Windows Media Player is working.

1. On your own computer, go to Programs/Accessories/Entertainment (or Multimedia)/Windows Media Player.
2. Click on Play and see if it works.
3. If it doesn't work or if you do not have Windows Media Player, go to <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/en/download/default.asp> Download the latest version of the software and install it on your computer.
4. You need to do this several days before the call, because it takes time to download and install Media Player.

15-30 Minutes Before the Presentation: Verify that you can connect to the call.

1. Go to the PATH website www.pathprogram.samhsa.gov and click on the link to the live broadcast of the teleconference. The link is right underneath the call announcement. If you have not done this before, we recommend you try to connect 15 minutes before the actual time of the call.
Enter the above address in the address window of your Internet browser. The space where it is to be entered is called ADDRESS in MS Internet Explorer and LOCATION in Netscape. After you enter the address simply press ENTER. **DO NOT click on the Search button.**
2. You should hear music playing or at least see the title of the call. If you do, you know you're connected to the correct link for the broadcast.
3. If you do not hear music or if you get an error message:
 - Check the Volume Control icon in the lower right corner of your screen. It looks like a megaphone. Open the Volume Control by clicking it and increase the volume. Try again in 15 minutes.
 - Recheck your Windows Media Player.
 - Try again in a few minutes. It may be that many people are accessing the call at once.
 - Try the other link.
 - Call Margaret Lassiter at (518) 439-7415, ext. 230.